



Measuring unpaid care in the Labour Account consultation

Closed 28 Feb 2025

Opened 29 Nov 2024

Contact

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Feedback updated 28 May 2025

We asked

The Australia Bureau of Statistics undertook a consultation process from December 2024 to February 2025 canvassing views on early experimental estimates of the total hours spent on unpaid care, and their monetary value. These new measures will improve the visibility of the contribution of unpaid care to society.

The ABS intends to publish unpaid care estimates on an annual basis in the future. In addition, sex and age demographic breakdowns will be included in the existing Labour Account estimates to facilitate a meaningful point of comparison with some paid work equivalents (timing for the release of the aforementioned components to be determined).

The consultation process sought stakeholder views on the following aspects of the measurement of unpaid care:

- The definition of care work,
- Valuation methods for unpaid care and the ABS' preferred approach,
- Market replacements for unpaid care activities,
- Presenting unpaid care estimates in context,
- Additivity across various unpaid care estimates,
- Utility of age groupings presented, and
- Unpaid adult care measurement.

You said

A large number of responses were received during the consultation period, from both individuals and organisations. The consultation highlighted the importance of recognising the contribution of unpaid carers and supported the ABS for moving towards measuring this activity on a regular basis.

Main themes emerging from the consultation responses included:

- The vast majority (84%) of responses indicated broad support for the ABS definition of care work.
- The vast majority (88%) of responses indicated it would be useful for the ABS to publish a range of estimates using different methodologies.
- The majority (72%) of responses indicated it would be useful to present estimates using the median wage rate for context.
- The majority (60%) of responses indicated publishing sex and age totals separately without forced alignment would be most useful.
- Most responses (38%) indicated no preference for whether age groupings are presented consistently with paid work age groups.

We did

Since the consultation period, further work has been undertaken to build on the initial estimates of unpaid childcare published in November 2024. This work has focussed on populating estimates of unpaid adult care and producing a full time series of both unpaid childcare and unpaid adult care. These additional steps will be described in an upcoming information paper in late June 2025; a series of data download spreadsheets will also be made available as part of this release.

In compiling these estimates, the ABS has incorporated key aspects of feedback received through the consultation process, this includes:

- publishing a range of measures for various replacement cost options,
- maintaining separate totals for sex and age without forcing alignment,
- presenting age groups which are the most accurate and useful for unpaid care, including separating the 55 years and older age group to 55 to 64 years and 65 years and over, and
- presenting a median wage rate to provide context to the estimates.

The consultation process also highlighted some aspects of unpaid care which were beyond the scope of these first set of experimental estimates. The ABS will continue to investigate and consider these suggestions and will look to incorporate aspects which can be measured in future iterations where possible, given input data source constraints and limitations.

Examples for potential future work include:

- Separately identifying and valuing care for children with a disability.
- Accounting for varying “intensity” of unpaid care provided, for example through accounting for the number of unpaid carers present in a single household.
- What would unpaid care be valued at if a carers payment or equivalent were applied instead of a replacement cost wage rate?
- Separately identifying short term care provided to adults, which is conceptually outside the scope of our care framework, however, may be captured in Time Use Survey estimates.
- Expanding our definition of care to incorporate additional elements where possible.
- Modelling additional financial aspects or costs to the unpaid carer, for example lost superannuation or leave entitlements.

The ABS would like to thank all those who provided responses through the consultation process and the important role this played in shaping the development of unpaid care estimates. For any further comment or information, please contact the ABS by emailing unpaid.care.consultation@abs.gov.au

Overview

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has been funded to expand the [Labour Account](#) to improve estimates on the total hours spent on unpaid care and their monetary value. These new measures will improve the visibility of the contribution of unpaid care to society and the economy, alongside the extensive information on paid work.

This [information paper](#) presents early experimental estimates of unpaid childcare in Australia for June quarter 2021, based on initial work on concepts and methods, along with information on further plans and future directions.

The valuation of unpaid care is an emerging area of measurement internationally and the approach is expected to evolve over time. This consultation will provide an opportunity for the public to provide the ABS with feedback on the current approach to measuring unpaid care in the Labour Account.

Why your views matter

Feedback from the Consultation Hub will help the ABS prioritise and refine

unpaid care estimates to ensure they meet the needs of users. This feedback will guide the production of more detailed experimental estimates to be published in mid-2025.

To make a submission:

1. Please read the information:

- [Measuring the labour contribution of unpaid care in the Labour Account information paper](#)
- [Measuring unpaid care in the Labour Account FAQs](#)
- [Measuring unpaid care in the Labour Account consultation Collection Notice](#)

All papers are linked under the heading **Related** at the bottom of the ABS Consultation Hub **Overview** page.

2. A link is provided on the ABS Consultation Hub for the Measuring unpaid care in the Labour Account survey where you will be guided to provide feedback through a series of questions. You are not required to respond to every question, although your submission will be strengthened by your ability to answer this survey as thoroughly as possible.

The closing date for submission is 28 February 2025.

The ABS will consider all submissions received from this consultation and will provide an update on future directions in mid-2025.

The ABS will not respond to individual submissions, instead a summary will be published in response to all submissions.

Related

 [Measuring unpaid care in the Labour Account FAQs](#)
25.0 KB (Office Word 2007 XML document)

 [Measuring the labour contribution of unpaid care in the Labour Account information paper](#)

 [Measuring unpaid care in the Labour Account consultation Collection Notice](#)

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